

A Lifetime Investment

a study on stewardship



William Borden

In 1904, William Borden, heir to the Borden Dairy Estate, graduated from a Chicago high school a millionaire. His parents gave him a trip around the world. Traveling through Asia, the Middle East, and Europe gave Borden a burden for the world's hurting people. Writing home, he said, "I'm going to give my life to prepare for the mission field."

Before venturing to the mission field Borden had given hundreds of thousands of dollars to various Christian organizations, while at the same time refusing to succumb to the temptation of buying himself a car—"an unjustifiable luxury."

When he made this decision, he wrote in the back of his Bible two words: "No Reserves." Turning down high paying job offers after graduating from Yale University, he entered two more words in his Bible: "No Retreats."

Completing studies at Princeton Seminary, Borden sailed for China to work with Muslims, stopping first at Egypt for some preparation. While there he was stricken with cerebral meningitis and died within a month, ending his dream to be a missionary to the Muslims in northwest China. Yet, in his Bible, he had written the words "No Regrets."

From Ruth A. Tucker's *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*



John Beckett

When Peter Jennings and ABC News visited Elyria, Ohio, to interview John D. Beckett, President of R.W. Beckett Corporation, America saw a company that used the Bible as a guide to their business. Beckett Corporation is a company where the relationship between faith and work not only exists but also thrives to power one of the largest manufacturers of residential oil burners in the world.



The Beckett Corporation, under John Beckett's leadership, set guidelines for their company to be built on a platform of three core values: integrity, excellence and profound respect for the individual, all of which are based on applying biblically based philosophy for every phase of its operations—from the assembly line to maternity care.

Those in leadership—their values, their competence, their commitment, their ability to work well together, and the example they set, determine the character of a company. John Beckett lives with the knowledge that vital aspects of faith can influence your work, and that the Bible serves as the crucial link between faith and work.



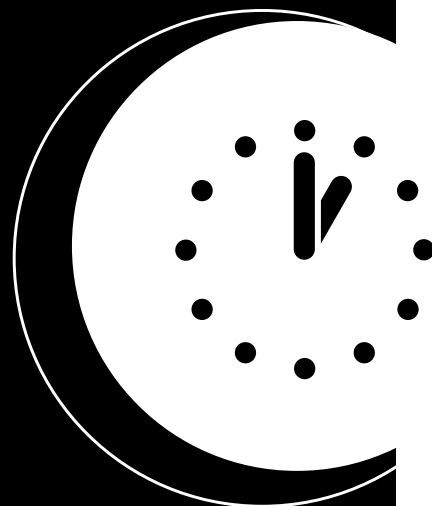
From John Beckett's
Loving Monday: Without Selling Your Soul

Lisa Leigh

The road to becoming White House correspondent for the Tribune Broadcasting Company wasn't easy, but it's apparent that God has led Lisa Leigh through her career as a television journalist. She started with a cold call to the main switchboard at NBC in search of an internship (which she got), went on a trek through up-state New York and Pennsylvania in search of a TV job, and eventually logged enough time in the White House press corps to move from the back row to the middle of the briefing room.

Frequent job changes and moves to new cities are common in the early years of many careers, especially TV journalism. Each time Lisa moved to a new city, she contacted friends and organizations who could connect her with people, a church, or a ministry in her new home town that would help her grow in her faith and give her an opportunity to minister to others. It's encouragement like this that, in the midst of a demanding schedule, has had her discipling women who are discipling others and recognizing God-given opportunities to share the gospel with co-workers.

Her struggles with life and career adjustments pale in comparison with the challenge of maintaining Christian integrity while pursuing professional excellence. "When I'm writing my stories and I'm tempted to bash somebody, or I'm tempted to skew my reports, I'm gently reminded that I'm to seek the truth, and do my job fairly and accurately. God holds me accountable."



Food for Thought

What do you find remarkable about these lives?

What do you think enabled them to respond so freely with their life?

Do you see that response in people today? Why?

What do you think holds us back from living that kind of life?

[May respond with sin, selfishness, pride, etc... Fundamentally, sin is at the root, but if we take a step back from the root issue, we can see that sometimes we are unable because we don't have a big enough view of what is God's and what is ours.]

Matthew 25:14-27

14 "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. 15 To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.

16 The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. 17 So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. 18 But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

19 "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20 The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.'

21 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

22 "The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.'

23 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

24 "Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

26 "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? 27 Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.'

What is stewardship?

stewardship (n): the conducting, supervising, managing of something; especially the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care.

entrust (v): 1. To confer a trust on; especially, to deliver something in trust to; 2. To commit to another with confidence (Webster's Dictionary)

Stewardship vs. Ownership

Through the parable, we learn that the Master entrusted his property to his servants. What's the difference between being entrusted with something and owning it?

How were the servants good stewards of what the Master had entrusted to them? How was the one servant not a good steward?

What about you?

What are some areas in your life where God desires us to be a good steward? (Brainstorm a list of areas)

Are there areas in your life where you are exercising ownership instead of stewardship? (i.e., career, marriage, major, etc.)

What do you think is God's vision for you as you look at the areas of your life that God has entrusted to you? (Colossians 3:17)

What motivates us to be good stewards of what God has entrusted to us in these areas of our lives?

How can we help each other be good stewards of what we have been entrusted to (accountability in the body)?



Looking over the list you brainstormed above, how can you be a good steward of these things? What are some practical steps you can take?
List specific actions you could take.

God has gifted you with talents and skills you can use now. What are some ways you can use what he has entrusted you by getting involved with your movement or church?

How would the concept of stewardship affect your decision in choosing a major?

How would it affect your decision for what to do this summer? This spring break?

What occupational roles could maximize what God has entrusted to you?

How could this concept of stewardship (where we are the managers of what our Master has entrusted to us) affect how you approach the job search process and selecting a job?

How would it affect how you look at and how you use your income/salary?

How would it affect how you use your free time?